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BRIDEWEALTH NEGOTIATIONS AMONG THE TURKANA IN NORTHWESTERN KENYA - PREFACE

AUTHOR(S):

Ohta, Itaru

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PREFACE

The Turkana live in the dry areas of northwestern Kenya and lead a pastoral way of life. They transfer enormous amounts of livestock as bridewealth, the most among that recorded for any pastoral peoples in Africa. Bridewealth is always determined through lengthy negotiations between the families of the groom and bride, and the number of animals given in bridewealth sometimes exceeds two-thirds of the property of the groom's family.

This volume consists of three parts. Part 1 describes marriage and bridewealth negotiations among the Turkana, providing basic information on kinship structure, livestock ownership, the process of arranging marriages, and bridewealth amounts. Part 1 also describes an actual case of bridewealth negotiations that took place on September 6–7, 1998, which details how people behaved in face-to-face negotiations and the process of obtaining mutual agreements on numbers of bridewealth animals.

Part 2 is a transcription of the bridewealth negotiations mentioned above in both English and Turkana. This transcription shows how people conducted the difficult and heated negotiations, often with impassioned rhetoric.

Part 3 is a DVD documentary of the above-mentioned negotiations and subsequent wedding rituals. Conversations are in the Turkana language. However, readers may refer to the complete transcription in Part 2.

At the time the video documentary was filmed, I worked for the Open University of Japan. Goichi Nozaki, then Director of the University, provided all necessary assistance. Nobuhiko Hosaka, Seiji Inoue, Ichiro Yokoyama, and Chiaki Iwakawa of IOS Filming Company also extended valuable aid. Gabriel Ekalale, John Elim Kaatho, Boniface Korobe, and Epat Longole helped me to make transcriptions from video recordings.

I conducted research in Kenya as a research associate of the Institute of African Studies, University of Nairobi. Successive directors of the Institute, Dr. Simiyu Wandibba and Dr. Isaac Nyamongo, offered me great support. The Nairobi Office of Japan Society for the Promotion of Science provided all the necessary assistance. The staff and graduate students of the Center for African Area Studies and Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies, Kyoto University, encouraged the study. All of my Turkana friends, especially those who participated in the film, gave me hospitality and friendship.

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Itaru Ohta
Center for African Area Studies, Kyoto University
Kyoto